



City of Somerville

April 2021

Council on Aging News

Interim Executive Director

Ashley Speliotis, LICSW
aspeliotis@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2310

Staff

Connie Lorenti ▪
Admin/Fiscal Assistant
clorenti@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2319

Natasha Naim ▪
LICSW Social Worker
nnaim@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2317

Chris Kowaleski ▪
Health & Wellness Coordinator
ckowaleski@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2315

Debby Higgins ▪
Outreach Coordinator
dhiggins@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2321

Maureen Cuff Bastardi ▪
Program Coordinator
mbastardi@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2335

Mary Marshall ▪
Nutritionist
headtofitness10@yahoo.com
617-625-6600 ext. 2316

Josephine Raczkowski ▪
Administrative Assistant
jrackowski@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2300

Judy Calvey ▪
Holland Street and
Ralph & Jenny Director
jcalvey@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2300



Hello Friends,

As we enter April we welcome both the rainy days and the warm gentle breezes of spring. We look for the first hints of new blooms on trees and the first tulip poking out of the ground. Warmer temperatures and increasingly longer days can improve our moods and make us feel more cheerful and hopeful.

We hope that you too feel the renewed energy that a new season brings and hope that this energy inspires you to stretch out of your comfort zone, to forge new connections and try new programming. Perhaps you will find a program that sparks joy and excitement within this newsletter!

We have multiple ways for you to learn, be active and connect with others. I know that the transition to gather online has been a tough one. However, the rewards to staying connected, especially during this time, has been more impactful than ever. While on a recent Zoom activity one of our active friends from the center joined for her first Zoom class. When she saw familiar faces from the center she exclaimed "I can see you, this is going to be a wonderful day!" And for me, sharing in her surprise and joy, it was.

Let's plant the seeds of connection today so that they may blossom into deep friendships tomorrow.

~Ashley



Social Work Corner with Natasha Naim

Building Resiliency During Rainy Days



April has many of us thinking of the common saying, April showers bring May flowers. While our first thought is to interpret this literally, that rainy days are necessary to see beautiful flowers, we can also interpret it metaphorically. Many of us have had to weather the metaphorical storms to bloom into the wonderful, beautiful people we have become. The concept of recovering from difficulties and the ability to emotionally cope with a crisis is known as resiliency. The hard work of building resiliency can yield wonderful benefits in the long term and can help us weather many storms.

One way to build resiliency is to maintain social connections. Research has shown that connecting with other people has numerous benefits, while isolation and a lack of social connection can negatively impact our physical and mental health. A common barrier to making social connections is the perception that we are inconveniencing others. It's common to think of the worst case scenario when trying to make or renew connections but we should also think of the best case scenario. If you are looking to connect with another person consider signing up for our Friendly Phone Caller Program. This program specializes in connecting older adults with community volunteers.

Another way to build resiliency is to reach out for help when you need it. Even before you need assistance, learn about programs and benefits that are available in the community. Similar to the barriers preventing social connections, barriers to asking for help exist as well. Some thoughts that prevent people from accessing services are "there are other people who need help more than I do" or "I don't think I qualify for anything, so I'm not going to bother". It's important to take into consideration that accessing a service doesn't mean that others will be denied and qualifications vary greatly across programs. If you are facing difficulties it's important to reach out to access services that can benefit you and your loved ones.

***If you would like to join our Friendly Phone Caller Program or if you or someone you know needs help with learning more about programs or accessing services, please call
Social Worker, Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600 ext. 2317***

***To RSVP to the following programs please call Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600 ext. 2317
or e-mail her at nnaim@somervillema.gov***

Mental Health Awareness

Tuesday, April 13th from 11:30-12:30 the Somerville Council on Aging, in partnership with Roberta Robinson, from Cambridge Health Alliance, will be continuing our Mental Health Awareness series. Every month Roberta discusses new and interesting topics in regards to mental health.

Caregiver Check-In

Are you a caregiver for a loved one and want to connect with other caregivers? Would you like to discuss the joys and challenges of caregiving? The Somerville Council on Aging is hosting a monthly check-in via Zoom for caregivers. Our next check-in will take place on ***Tuesday, April 27th from 11:30-12:30.***

Brown Box Distribution, April 22nd

Many of us are facing food insecurities due to COVID-19. If you find yourself in need, please reach out to us! The COA can assist with applications for food stamps, our Brown Box shelf-stable food program, or connect you with a local food pantry.



An important topic that we get asked a lot about is overdose prevention. Somerville is committed to decreasing opioid misuse by educating our community on how to understand, recognize, and respond effectively to a potential overdose as one would for any other medical emergency. A key resource available is Narcan, a life-saving drug that can reverse the effects of an opioid-related overdose. Narcan is available over the counter at your local pharmacy (ask your pharmacist!) as well as located in the first aid kits in any city-owned building in case of an emergency.

If you are interested in learning more about overdose prevention, please consider signing up for a FREE virtual training on one of the dates below:

Tuesday, April 13th at 3pm: <http://bit.ly/April13registration>

Monday, May 10th at 3pm: <http://bit.ly/May10registration>

Tuesday, June 15th at 3pm: <http://bit.ly/June15registration>

If you have any additional questions about how to access Narcan, attend an overdose prevention training and/or want to schedule a training a date/time not offered above, please reach out to ***mmitchell@somervillema.gov***.

Please keep your questions coming! Please send any to ***kvaughan@somervillema.gov***

Matthew Mitchell, LSW, Prevention Services Manager

Kira Vaughan, LMHC, Substance Use Prevention Coordinator

Nutrition with Mary Marshall



Whether you are celebrating Easter or Passover this spring, you probably have favorite dishes that you are looking forward to eating. It's no surprise that most of these holiday favorites are brimming with calories, fat, and sometimes cholesterol or sugar. We can transform traditional holiday favorites into yummy dishes that contain half the fat and a lot less calories, just by making a few recipe adjustments. In general, you can:

- * Substitute reduced-fat dairy products for regular versions.
- * Use lean meats, and light sausages, instead of regular or full-fat versions and remove skin from poultry .
- * Exchange egg substitute or egg whites for half of the eggs called for in recipes (1/4 cup of egg substitute or two egg whites is equivalent to one whole egg)
- * Substitute olive or canola oil for vegetable oil, and you can usually cut the amount of oil in half. For baking recipes, nonfat ingredients like fruit juice, nonfat sour cream and pureed fruit should be substituted for the missing fat.
- * For most recipes, cut the amount of butter in half. For baked goods, other ingredients such as nonfat sour cream and nonfat cream cheese, can fill in for the fat.

LIGHTER Chicken Matzo Ball Soup-For the matzo balls, replace half the eggs with egg whites or egg substitute. Use half the amount of fat the recipe calls for and replace the rest with chicken broth.

LIGHTER Potato Casseroles-Substitute reduced-fat canned cream of mushroom or celery soups, along with reduced-fat cheeses, sour cream, and milk. If butter or margarine is called for, it can generally be cut in half if not eliminated.

Upcoming Workshops

*How to Build and Eat a Balanced Diet Workshop
For Better Health and Weight Loss
Wednesday April 28th @ 10:00 am on Zoom*

*To RSVP please call Mary Marshall at
617-625-6600 ext. 2316 or e-mail her at headtofitness10@yahoo.com*



Chris Kowaleski, Health and Wellness

Now that it's getting warmer and you can spend more time outside, it's a great time to create an outdoor plan for moving your body. Creating a plan each week allows you to think about different ways and places in which you can exercise. Remember that you don't always have to walk or exercise in the same location each day- in fact new places can turn your relaxing stroll into a cardio challenge!

One of the wonderful things about the City of Somerville is the many parks and green spaces the city has to offer. With over 48 parks and green spaces, you shouldn't have to go far to find one! If you find it difficult on your body to walk on hard surfaces, try walking in a park! Another great place to walk is the bike path. The path provides a safe place to walk and exercise away from traffic and provides softer surfaces that will lessen the impact on your body as you move. If you are looking for a more challenging workout, a great asset in the city are Somerville's many hills. Though many of us may try to avoid them, walking up hills, even at a slow pace, is a great cardio workout. Just like stairs, the incline of a hill will make your body work harder, building muscle and increasing your endurance. As with any workout, it is important to remember to do what you can and not to overdo. If you plan to add walking up hills into your workout routine, remember you don't have to start by going all the way to the top. Start by walking up part of the hill first and make it your goal to get to the top over time.

While exercising outside, remember to take precautions. Even when it's not incredibly sunny outside, it is always a good idea to apply sunscreen and it is just as important to stay hydrated. Even in cooler temperatures it's easy for a person to get dehydrated if your body isn't used to the weather or exertion. We highly recommend drinking a glass of water before and after you exercise and it's always a good idea to take a water bottle with you. Loose fitting, lighter colored clothes are also helpful to wear during the warmer months to help keep your body cooler.

For suggestions for new walking routes check out the City of Somerville website:

www.somervillema.gov/walkingroutes

Our online **Zoom Yoga** series continues **Tuesday, April 6th at 10:00am**, the COA's yoga instructor Janine Duffy will be leading a 45 minute gentle yoga class live over Zoom. Each class will include gentle poses done from a chair or standing.

Zoom Jeopardy Game Night! on **Thursday, April 15th at 5:00pm**, we will be hosting an hour long Health and Wellness Jeopardy game.

The **Ageless Grace Exercise Program** continues with instructor Maria Skinner on **April 6th and 20th in English** and **April 13th and April 27th in Spanish**—all are welcome to join!

For additional information or to sign up for the above programs, contact Chris by email at ckowaleski@somervillema.gov or by phone at 617-625-6600 ext. 2315.

Music and Movement



Wednesday April 14th from 10:30 am-11:30 am—Via Zoom or Call In

Join Steve as he plays guitar, sings and leads gentle movements. Just tapping your toe or singing along can help move your body in new ways.

Please RSVP to Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov or 617-625-6600 ext. 2321.

Book Club

Friday, April 16th from 10:00 am -11:00 am

Do you love books and want to discuss your love of reading with others? Consider joining book club. Book club is now meeting online via Zoom.

This month's book will be: ***Fly Girls: How Five Daring Women Defied All Odds And Made Aviation History*** by Keith O'Brien.

April Boxed Lunch Pick-Up

April's monthly boxed lunch pick up will be held on ***Wednesday, April 21st at the Ralph and Jenny Center.***

While we can't share lunch together we hope you are able to drive thru to pick up a lunch. ***Masks and RSVPs required; please call Connie at 617-625-6600 ext.2319 to sign up.***

April Mask Drive Thru

***Friday, April 23rd from 10:30 am-12:00 pm
Holland St Center***

The COA has masks available for Somerville residents who are 60 and over. If you are in need of a mask or may know of a friend or neighbor who may need a new mask stop by our Drive-Thru.

Virtual Bingo Day!

Tuesday, April 27th from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Join us online or via phone to play ***BINGO***.

We will supply you with the bingo cards and instructions.

Space is limited

To RSVP call Debby at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or e-mail her at dhiggins@somervillema.gov

